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NEWS RELEASE

THE SOUL OF LOS ANGELES IN BLACK AND WHITE — PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT LEAVING CALIFORNIA FOR FIRST TIME TO COME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

DAYTON, Ohio — As diverse as the city of Los Angeles has become, so are the ways in which its people worship. Photographer Jerry Berndt portrays the vast variety of rituals and, even more so, the common themes among religions in *The Soul of Los Angeles*, a collection of 100 black-and-white photographs to be on display at the University of Dayton in the fall.

Although the exhibit has appeared at some 20 venues in California, its trip to UD will be its first across state lines. The exhibit will open with a reception at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 10, in the Roesch Library first-floor gallery and remain on display through Sunday, Dec. 1. Both the reception and exhibit are free and open to the public.

Scott Young, director of photographic exhibits for the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California whence the exhibit comes, will speak at the reception.

The collection comprising *The Soul of Los Angeles* was pulled from more than 1,000 photographs Berndt shot during several years working with Donald Miller, a USC religion professor, to create "On Common Ground, Los Angeles as a Microcosm of the World's Religions," a photo and text documentary of religion in L.A. Berndt and Miller took cameras and tape recorders into L.A. neighborhoods for the project, described by the *Los Angeles Times* as "part photo exhibition, part social science project, with the larger goal of documenting L.A.'s first-generation immigrants and the role that religion plays in helping them adjust to their new home."

The photographs feature people engaged in worship — traditional worship, such as kneeling in submission or with hands folded, held over faces or raised in praise — and nontraditional workshop, such as marching for peace, protesting killing of engaged in social service. They can be viewed online at www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/religion_online/commonground/index.html.

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Fred Niles, chair of UD's department of visual arts, said the exhibit is important because it will "point out to students and people in general how art — photography in particular — can bring to light issues within a community that need to be addressed, as well as issues that are positive factors in the community. This kind of education is very much in keeping with the University's mission for its students and the greater community."

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